

# APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR CLASSIFYING PACKETS

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and apparatus can direct packets from a first network to a second network, e.g., a backbone network. Packets of the first network follow a predetermined protocol employing global addressing. Packets of the first network have a source identification code, a destination code, and a service code. The second network offers the benefit of one of a plurality of service classes. A host (in some case in cooperation with a gateway) can (a) originate at least some of the packets and set the source identification code, the destination code, and the service code for the packets, and (b) send the packets from the host on at least one hop consistent with the destination code. An edge router can transfer the packets to the second network offering the benefit of one or more service classes. The edge router has an input device and an output device. The input device can extract from the packets the source identification code and the service code. A table stored in the edge router can use the source identification code drawn from the input device to lookup a corresponding code indicating permission with respect to the service classes. A permissible one of the service classes is allocated consistent with the service code if the service code is consistent with the corresponding code. The output device communicates with the input device and can send the packets onto the second network with the benefit of the permissible one of the service classes.